

The Face of Evil

By Guy Roberson

(Some thoughts on tragedy and suffering) As I prepare this article I am listening to the terrible news of the shooting that took place this morning at Newtown CT., where 26 people were killed including 20 little children in their classroom at school. I am crushed as I think of such senseless slaughter of adults and innocent lives and then the broken hearts of their loved ones. I can't imagine what would motivate someone to kill anyone in the first place, let alone these precious little children who were being taught their studies. We have been made aware in recent years that evil lurks everywhere and that we are not safe anywhere because evil strikes without warning and without discrimination.

Naturally we ask, "Why is there so much evil in the world?" If you do not believe in God and the Bible, how do you answer this question? There is absolutely no answer other than "that is just the way it is." If there is no God then there isn't any hope for the world or any explanation for why we feel that the world ought to be better. Some ask, "If there is a God why does He allow so much evil?" "If God is so great and so good, why does He allow human beings to hurt each other? H. G. Wells said that faced with what we see around us in the world, we are forced to conclude either "God has the power and does not care, or that God cares but does not have the power." The creation of the world demonstrates that God is all-powerful and the fact that God gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to save the world illustrates that God cares. C. S. Lewis said, "Evil can only be known and measured against a standard of good. Apart from God and the morality that flows from Him there is no standard – and therefore no evil either," he explained. "But we know in our hearts – it's inescapable – that evil is real." So why is there so much evil?

God created a world in which people were given free wills (Rom. 6:16). God has given us the capacity to make choices regarding how we will act and the ability to make moral choices that have consequences (James 1:12-18). These choices often affect the lives of those around us. God created Adam and Eve perfect, not evil, and with free will, not mindless puppets. They had the ability to think, to obey or disobey with the ability to love and follow God or not. They chose to disobey and therefore to sin and this brought sin and evil into the world (Rom. 5:12). Because every person has free will Paul said, for all sin and fall short of the glory of our Creator (Rom. 3:23). Sin's existence creates a distinction between the righteous and the wicked and this enables us to see that God's laws are the best for mankind (Ecc. 3:16-18).

We think that God should stop someone from committing such terrible sins as this horrible shooting in Newtown, CT. But if God were to stop such sins then He would have to deal with all sin in order to be fair and just. That would mean that God would have to stop "immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). If the Lord decreed that all evil and sin should be removed from the world today which of us would be here tomorrow? This we would not accept.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:28 that believers have "been called according to His purpose." God wants our lives to be conformed to the life of His Son (2Cor. 3:18). Everything that happens whether good or bad has this purpose and this includes disasters, suffering and tragedy. God permits suffering and uses it for our good, for the blessing of others, and for His glory (Heb. 12:11; 1Peter 4:7-11; Eph. 4:22-24). Our heavenly Father is working through Jesus Christ to lead many sons and daughters to glory (Heb. 2:10) where we will never again experience sin or any such tragedies and we will bask in the glory of God and enjoy heaven forever (1Peter 1:3-9).

Lessons from the Critters

The Buzzard. If you put a buzzard in a pen that is 6 feet by 8 feet and is entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of its ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of 10 to 12 feet. Without space to run, as is its habit, it will not even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.

The Bat. The ordinary bat that flies around at night, a remarkable nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and, no doubt, painfully, until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then, at once, it takes off like a flash.

The Bumblebee. A bumblebee, if dropped into an open tumbler, will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

Human Beings. In many ways, we are like the buzzard, the bat, and the bumblebee. We struggle about with all our problems and frustrations, never realizing that the solution is look up, to look toward God. Sorrow looks back, worry looks around, but faith looks up. Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and trust in our Creator, who loves us.

A Moments Wisdom

- Misfortunes test friends and detect enemies.
- He is always right who suspects that he makes mistakes.
- A mistake at least proves that someone stopped talking long enough to do something.
- The man who takes the time to explain his mistakes has little time for anything else.
- The only complete mistake is the one from which we learn nothing.
- It's alright to forget your mistakes as long as you remember their lessons.
- Do not be disturbed over being misunderstood; be disturbed over not understanding.
- Moderation in one's temper is a virtue; moderation in one's principles is a vice.
- They love the old who have not experienced the new.
- It is the shame of our times that when money speaks, the truth is silent.
- The hardest thing about making money last is making it first.
- The person who does not know where his next dollar is coming from, usually doesn't know where his last dollar went.
- A narrow mind and a wide mouth usually go together.